

Speaking Notes

For

The Honourable Bill Blair

**President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada
and Minister of Emergency Preparedness**

**Ministerial Presser: Blockades
Wednesday, February 16, 2022**

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- Good afternoon, everyone.
- Thank you for being here with us today.
- On Monday, our government invoked the Emergencies Act to supplement and support Provincial and Territorial authorities to address the ongoing blockades at a number of key border crossings across the country, as well as the serious situation we're seeing here in Ottawa.
- Let me acknowledge that this was not a decision we came to lightly. This is a significant step that requires both caution, and a tremendous amount of care.
- And let me assure everyone watching today that these measures are targeted, temporary and proportionate.
- It's important, as well, for Canadians to recognize that the Emergencies Act requires that every action be Charter compliant, and that their rights and freedoms are respected.
- Additionally, everything that is done through this Act is subject to parliamentary oversight and review.
- These measures were only invoked after exhausting all other options, and it is our sincere hope that we will be able to lift them as soon as possible.

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- We did this to keep Canadians safe, to protect our economy, and to restore confidence in our institutions.
- I would like to recognize the work of the Windsor Police, the Ontario Provincial Police, and the RCMP, to reopen, and secure, the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor.
- The same can be said at both the Coutts Border Crossing in Alberta, and the Pacific Highway Border Crossing in British Columbia.
- Our government, and all Canadians, thank the Alberta RCMP and the British Columbia RCMP for successfully facilitating the reopening of these crossings, and enforcing the law in their jurisdictions.
- With commercial vehicles now traveling unimpeded through these ports of entry, grocery store shelves are being stocked, factories and businesses are receiving the parts and supplies they need, and hard-working Canadians are able to get back to work.
- In Ottawa, we're pleased to see progress in the effort to end the unlawful occupation that has had a devastating impact on residents for nearly three weeks.
- Yesterday, Acting Chief of Police Steve Bell confirmed that the Ottawa Police Service has the resources from the

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Ontario Provincial Police and the RCMP, and the authorities from both the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario, to end the illegal demonstration that has disrupted the City of Ottawa for far too long.

- We look forward to seeing our law enforcement partners continue to work together, through the Integrated Command Centre, to restore order in the community safely and swiftly.
- These illegal blockades have shown us just how fragile our supply chains are, but we will not let them give anyone the same impression of our democracy.
- Canada is a strong, democratic nation. We will not let foreign entities that would seek to do harm to Canada, and to Canadians, erode trust in our institutions and question the legitimacy of our government.
- As our Minister of Justice and Attorney General David Lametti said on Monday, Canada is a rule of law country. By declaring a public order emergency under the Emergencies Act, we are following the law and we are acting within it.
- Thank you very much.

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